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Tracts for the People.

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES.—No. I.

ON ALMS-GIVING.

"Alms deliver from death." Tob. xii. 8.

[Continued from page 279.]

"You are not done yet," answered an old friend of the Colonel's. "We have all I am sure been delighted with all that you have said; but you alluded to some event in your life which had impressed these principles strongly on your mind, and you spoke of it as something terrible. Now I have often heard you relate extraordinary adventures in which you have been engaged, but I cannot recollect any of the character you have mentioned: I am sure all will join me in requesting you to tell it."

The Colonel was evidently troubled and agitated; but we all pressed the suit, and he yielded, and proceeded to relate as follows:

"I do not recollect that I have ever told this adventure, though the most romantic one perhaps of my life; for it is one which it always gives me pain to think of, at the same time that none has more impressed me with a sense of gratitude to God, or taught me better lessons of charity. And indeed though it occurred many years ago, every detail and circumstance of it has remained as vividly before my mind, as though it were an incident of yesterday.

"When I was a young man (although I had already seen much service), I made an extensive tour in Egypt and Palestine. Having seen every place ordinarily visited by travellers in the latter, and finding that I had a few weeks to dispose of, before there was a vessel to take me back, I determined to visit the Hauran, or country beyond the Jordan, a district into which hardly any European traveller had ventured. I was warned of the dangers of my undertaking from want of any accommodation, and from the treachery and wildness of the wandering Arabs who ranged over the desert. But I was young and ardent, I had often

faced the battle-field, and the idea of a little danger perhaps rather added a relish to my enterprise. I was accompanied by a trusty English servant, formerly a dragoon in my regiment, not indeed of great use at expedients, or when head was required, but of genuine courage and fidelity, and one who had saved my life in battle. I had, moreover, with me an Armenian Catholic interpreter, a shrewd and cool fellow, on whom I could entirely rely, perfectly acquainted with the manners and language of the country, sufficiently brave, and an exact observer of the duties of his religion. At every place of pilgrimage which he visited, though he had often been there before, he showed an ardent enthusiasm and deep devotion, would prostrate at the hallowed spot, and pray most fervently, and approach the sacraments, if an Armenian priest could be found. To me he had become warmly attached, because I was a Catholic. One thing I observed, that wherever he went he was profuse in his alms. The poor who flocked round those places of devotion, always got something from him, and it was always given with a good-natured look and kind word, and a request for prayers.

"I own that I thought all this extravagance in so poor a man, for he gave all away; and it seemed to me that he had much better lay something by for afterwards. I did not, with my English notions, feel moved, but rather annoyed by the clamorous importunity of the half-naked beggars at the church-porches, nor set much value on their hollow promises, as I thought then, of prayers. Still I could not help at heart admiring the simple faith and untiring charity of my attendant, and often thought that if we ever met a poor robbed and wounded traveller on the way-side, he was just the man to act the good Samaritan.

"To proceed, however: after visiting a number of curious places, chiefly deserted towns and villages beyond the Jordan, cut out of the rock or built of large stones, with even the stone doors moving on pivots yet remaining in the houses, I determined to push my way boldly across the desert to Damascus. We received our last instructions at a poor village where we slept, and where we made such meagre provision as we could

for ourselves and our horses for two days' travelling, till we could reach another inhabited place. It was a road hardly ever frequented, but we should easily trace it, with a little care, and for this I fully relied on my Armenian.

" 'You will keep your face towards the setting sun,' said our host, 'till you come towards mid-day to a fountain beneath a few palm-trees. This is the Ain-el-shems (the fountain of the sun), where you may refresh yourselves, and then turn to the left; and going northward through broken hills, you may reach Damascus to-morrow evening.'

" 'But is there no place,' we asked, 'where we could get shelter for the night?'

" 'After six hours' travelling from the fountain,' he replied, 'you will see to the right the ruins of the convent called Deir-el-Kebir (the Great Convent), destroyed ten years ago by the Arabs. *If you meet no one at the fountain*, you may find shelter there for the night. One or two rooms still remain, one of them I hear formerly inhabited by a Franji (or European). But I would advise you to hasten on.' So saying, he turned away, with a good wish of prosperous journey.

" Although somewhat perplexed by what we had heard, we started on our journey, and pushed forward vigorously through a desert but broken country, in which we did not see a soul or a house, or any vestige of cultivation. Yet our clever guide, though he had not before travelled the road, never hesitated a moment about the path; but, catching with wonderful sagacity every foot-mark, or difference of colour or consistency in the sand, led us forward at a smart trot. The spring was advancing, and the heat was already oppressive; so that we were not sorry when we saw before us a small clump of palm-trees surrounded by a green spot, which indicated the presence of water.

" 'There is the Ain-el-shems,' exclaimed the Armenian; 'I think I see some one among the trees!'

" We soon reached the spot. A few roods of verdure caused by the fountain, that is, by a thin thread of water issuing from a low rock, and caught into a small basin hollowed at its base, thence running over along the green patch, till the thirsty sand drank it up, five or six palm-trees growing bare up to a great height, and casting down only the shadow of their broad tufty heads on the grass, appeared like a little paradise to us, after the dreary and sultry ride of the morning. We soon set our horses at their ease, and then prepared our own frugal meal. We had now had sufficient time to notice the stranger whom we had seen from the distance. Against the shady side of one of the trees leaned a dirty,

squalid Dervish, or Mahometan religious beggar, scarcely half-clothed in rags. He seemed to take little or no notice of us, and hardly returned my Armenian's friendly salutation.

" This seemed only to increase his good-nature, for he urged him more and more earnestly to partake with us of our provisions, to my great disgust. The beggar obstinately refused, and at last said in a harsh tone, 'I will take any thing you leave me, but I cannot eat with infidels.' My wrath was greatly stirred up, but my companion kept perfectly cool; and after a searching look at the fellow's sinister countenance, now for the first time turned towards us, said to him, 'Pardon me, Sir, but I think I had the pleasure of seeing you yesterday evening at Hissab, where we slept.'

" 'No,' replied the other, 'the Prophet knows that I have been here these seven days, waiting the charity of any passers by. Probably it was my brother whom you saw, who is a Dervish too, and much resembles me.'

" 'Has he too, then,' asked the Armenian, with a sarcastic wink towards me, 'a scar across his forehead like you?' For so this one had.

" 'He has,' impudently answered the beggar. 'We are twins, and born under the same star. On the day, and at the hour, that I fell and cut my forehead, he received a blow from a stone in the same place.'

" When we had finished our meal, my guide put into the beggar's wallet all the broken provisions, and made some inquiries about the road, which the other answered with the greatest indifference. We were about to remount our horses, when the villanous-looking Dervish stretched out his hand to me for an alms. I was turning away angrily, when my attendant said to me, 'Give him an alms, Sir, and be liberal.'

" 'What!' I replied, 'is he not clearly an imposter, and a good-for-nothing fellow?'

" 'No matter; is he not poor, is he not hungry, is he not in the midst of a desert? Take my word for it, you will never repent giving even *him* an alms.'

" Vexed, but anxious to get away, I opened my purse, and gave the beggar one of the thin and broad silver coins of the country, which he received with perfect thanklessness, examined it, as if grudging a hole in it, by which it had been hung round some one's neck (a common practice in the east), and then dropt it into a leathern purse at his girdle.

" I did not speak for some time, so provoked was I at the fellow's insolent behaviour; at length I addressed my guide, and said, 'Narses, I am at a loss to understand your conduct towards that wretch. First, you pressed him to eat with us, and then you forced me to give him an alms,

which I never so much grudged in my life before. What did you mean by it?

“‘Why, to save you,’ he answered, ‘to save us all from danger. Have you forgotten the ominous words of our host this morning—if you meet no one at the fountain? This was warning enough, that any one whom we should meet, we must reckon a villain and an enemy.’

“‘And on this account you would treat him as an honest man and a friend?’

“‘No, but I would either win him or disarm him. I knew that if he could have been induced to partake of a single mouthful of food with us, *to eat salt with us*, he would not, being an Arab, have dared to injure us. His very refusal convinced me that he had a sinister design. There was, therefore, nothing left but to disarm him and make him powerless.’

“‘And how did you manage that?’

“‘I made you do it, Sir, by bestowing on him an alms.’

“I expressed my astonishment, and he continued:

“‘Remember that *an alms freeth from death*; when you have exercised charity towards the most worthless man, you have bound him towards you with an invisible chain, over which he has no control, a bond secured in heaven, which makes him your debtor, and places him at your service. I now can fear no evil or danger from him.’

“‘What!’ I exclaimed, ‘do you think that my trifling alms, given too most ungraciously, has softened him so as to turn him into a friend? I cannot believe it. Only remember how he received it.’

“‘No, Sir,’ he replied. ‘I mean not so. But you have gained the protection of Heaven against his designs. I will not believe that God will easily permit the man to injure us, who bears about him the token of our claim to mercy. It is a charm placed by us round his neck, which will foil his attempts to injure us.’

“We were interrupted by a sound, slight indeed, but, in that silent waste, distinct, as if of a horse dashing its foot against a stone. We both shaded our eyes with our hands, and saw at a distance a horseman splendidly mounted hastening in the same direction with ourselves. But for that slight accident we should not have noticed him, for he had taken care to go on the side of the sun, now declining, and glaring in our eyes. The Armenian whispered in my ear, ‘It is the Dervish. He is hurrying on, depend upon it, for no good purpose. But fear him not. Remember that it is written: *Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil, better than the shield of the mighty, and better than the spear.*’ (Ecclus. xxix. 15.)

“I own I could not enter fully into my attendant’s views: his was a simpler wisdom than mine, the light of a strong faith and a lively confidence in God, and an assurance of the literal fulfilment of words, which I should have taken only figuratively. Still I felt that in him was more of the spirit of true Christianity, more of the little one, more of the child, than in my worldly and material ideas.

“It was quite dusk when we saw on our right the ruins of the convent. Warned of our danger we would gladly have pushed on, but my servant’s horse was so jaded that it was necessary to give it rest, and we determined to examine the ruins, and see what quarters they could afford. We accordingly approached them. They formed a large imposing pile, evidently destroyed by violence and fire. But we soon found the rooms alluded to by our host. The outer door had originally been several feet above the ground, and accessible only by a ladder. This is the plan in the great convents of the desert, for greater security. But the rubbish from the other buildings had formed a causeway up to it, evidently used by men and horses. On entering, we found two large rooms vaulted over, and having no other communication from without. The stone door too was still there, thick and massive, but revolving on its pivots, and beside it a fragment of a half-burnt rafter, which seemed placed as a bar for effectually closing it.

“‘We shall do very well for the night,’ said Narses: ‘this door will resist any attack of midnight marauders, and the windows are too high to be scaled. We may sleep secure, and start early.’

“‘But suppose they besiege us,’ I remarked, ‘and wait for us without?’

“‘I do not fear that,’ he answered; ‘there are flanking the door small loop-holes through which we can either fire or parley. The little money that we have, will not only ransom us, but purchase an escort from any tribe, that we could so treat with in safety, and at Damascus you can be supplied with what you want.’

“We now set cheerfully to work, barricaded our door, foddered our horses, and made a fire in one corner of the outer room. In the inner apartment we found a few fragments of furniture, which indicated, as we had been told, the former residence of some European, perhaps of some monk who had been educated in Italy. For there was a broken chair and old table, and, what was far more welcome, a sort of bed-stead, or rather long box open at one end, covered with coarse and dirty canvass, on which by laying my cloak with my knapsack for a pillow, I felt I should have a most luxurious couch. Our supper ended, my attendants stretched themselves out in the first room, and I made what shift I could in my

state-apartment, to note down in my journal the events of the day. Long before I was done, it was clear that my companions were fast asleep. I was inclined to follow their example, and having recommended myself earnestly to the protection of Divine Providence and the custody of God's holy Angels and of His ever blessed Mother, I prepared to retire to rest.

"But throughout the evening, and more so since writing my journal, the words of my Armenian servant about alms kept returning to my mind: and I sat musing long upon them. 'Is it possible,' I said to myself, 'that I can have been brought up in ignorance of the true view of this important branch of christian obligation? My poor attendant seems to attach so high a privilege to it, to consider it so sure of its effects, so certain of grace, so sacramental almost, that he puts to shame all my notions on the subject. He certainly believed, and is now sleeping soundly in the confidence, that the poor coin so ungraciously given to that worthless Dervish has secured us from his machinations, and may be as a shield to me from his evil designs. Yet how much more like a scripture sentiment this sounds, than any statement of my English notions could be! But enough of speculation, it is time for rest.'

"So thinking, and half saying, I extinguished my poor light, and threw myself heavily on my bed. What was my horror at feeling myself rebound from something living and moving beneath. I uttered a loud cry of terror, but no one answered. My first thought was that it was some hyena or other beast of prey that had taken shelter in the room, and had crept under there on our coming in. But soon a stifled groan and a convulsive struggle convinced me, that it was a human being, on whom I pressed with sufficient weight and power to keep him down, but not to destroy him. I felt that I was about to be engaged in a mortal strife with an invisible enemy; seizing with both my hands on one side of the bed, I pressed down with all my weight, hoping thus to exhaust him; I drew in my breath, and concentrated my strength upon a downward pressure, while my adversary evidently struggled to relieve his throat from my arm which gripped it, and apparently, for I could feel every motion of a muscle, to free one of his hands which lay beneath me on his chest, thus helping me to crush him. By degrees I became exhausted, and could feel his right hand slip from under me. He was thus relieved, for I could now only just reach his breast and keep him down, but not weigh upon him. What his freed hand was about I could easily divine; for I could hear the blade of a dagger drawn, with difficulty, from its sheath; and now a slight movement made me feel that its point was

slowly directed upwards; and all was still, as if a rest was taken, and all the energy concentrated for one deadly thrust. Never shall I forget the terror and horror of that moment, the fainting feebleness of my limbs, the sickening and throbbing of my heart, the swimming of my head, and the cold creeping shiver over my flesh. I could not stir, I could not cry out, a blighting palsy seemed to have seized me, and nature seemed to have resigned herself to her last hour. A faint, half-choked cry for mercy escaped my lips, as I felt the treacherous point reach my side, distinctly sensible through my thin couch, and then a thrust directed with cool precision violently against me. I had been in battle, I had fought hand to hand, I had felt my sword go into my enemy's body (no one that has felt *that* ever forgets it), but never had I experienced such a fearful emotion as in that moment.

"'Father of mercies!' I exclaimed, 'how have I escaped?' For so slight was my protection and so violent was the blow, which actually lifted me up, that nothing short of a miracle could seem to have saved me. And there I could feel the weapon still erect beneath me, and pressing against the canvass below, yet as unable to penetrate it, as if this had been a rhinoceros's hide. Nay, I felt it was placed to my advantage, for cautiously and gradually urging it downwards, its hilt clearly pressed against my foe, and he struggled violently to draw it aside. Whatever might be the cause of the failure of the first blow, I saw that I must not give him a chance of a second; and therefore I determined to press my advantage. I grasped the frame of my bed with the eagerness of despair, and weighed down with all my might, when my hand met the handle of my dagger which I had placed with my pistols by my head. I seized it, and paused for a moment, hesitating whether I should thrust it down into my antagonist's breast. But no, I could not bear the thought of plunging a dagger into any one in the dark—it seemed a deed of blood, an assassination. While thus I hesitated he had the advantage of the relaxation of my efforts. He was loosening his poniard, I felt that I had not a moment to lose. A thought struck me, and it was instantly executed. I ran my blade along the edge of my couch, and separated it from the frame, the canvas gave way, and my full weight fell heavily and crushingly upon the enemy. It was now fairly a match of strength: we struggled for life, and dark and dismal was our wrestling; suddenly I felt a crash beneath me, the handle of his own weapon had forced its way between his ribs, his grasp relaxed, for he had seized my throat, I felt a convulsive quiver beneath me, then a tremulous shake, and all was still!

"I sprang up, trembling with excitement and disgust; and rushing forth, awoke my companions, telling them incoherently what had happened. We struck a light, and hastened to the fatal spot, and uncovered the bed. I turned away, sick at heart, when my Armenian exclaimed, 'It is the rascally Dervish! And now, Sir,' he continued, 'see if I was not right when I told you that your alms would disarm him, and disable him from hurting you.'

"'Truly,' I replied, 'Heaven has foiled his wicked designs.'

"'Yes,' he continued, 'and for, and by your alms. You see how but for them he would have struck you dead.'

"'How!' I exclaimed with astonishment, principally at what I thought the man's pertinacity in maintaining his own over-strained ideas. 'What do you mean?'

"'Look here,' he replied.

"I did look, and was struck dumb with amazement. There I saw the dagger, sharp and long enough to have pierced to my very heart, aimed most truly, thrust most vigorously—yet powerless and useless, as if by enchantment! And how was this? Why, in making his deadly thrust, the assassin had sent the point of his weapon against the leathern purse at his girdle; through one side of this it had passed as easily as through paper, nor would it have formed the slightest obstacle to the weapon's keen point and edge—but for the only coin in it—the very one I had given him in the morning. Through the hole which was in this, as I before mentioned, it had providentially passed, and been so fast wedged in by the very violence of the stroke, that we had difficulty in extricating it. It was thus like a foil, only the very point being free, but unable to pass through the folded cloak beneath me. I saw, too, why he was unable to draw away his dagger for a second stroke. For the handle in descending from the first, had got entangled in the ragged wallet containing the provisions given him by the Armenian, which by distending it allowed the hilt to get so caught, a circumstance that could not have happened had it been empty.

"I was overpowered by my mingled emotions, and could not speak; till my guide solemnly said:

"'Have not the alms which you *shut up in the heart* of this wretch (aye, his heart was in his purse), *obtained help for you, better than the shield of the mighty, and better than the spear*, protecting you, and piercing him. *Truly do alms deliver from death.*'

"'You are right!' I exclaimed; 'let us give our hearty thanks to God.' We did so with fervent gratitude; I, not only for the deliverance, but also for the lesson. And so ends my tale."

"Not at all," said one of the company. "Let us know the conclusion of the fearful adventure."

"I will do so briefly," he replied, "because the moral portion of the adventure ends here. I owed my escape to the sagacity of my guide. He observed attached to the treacherous Dervish's girdle a whistle, which at once revealed all the plot. He was no doubt to have crept out and opened the door when all were asleep, and then called some band of Arab companions to surprise us. After a little reflection, my guide suggested that we should have all things in readiness to fly, and, having hidden ourselves in the ruins with our horses, call the Arabs by the whistle, and escape while they were within. This seemed a wild scheme, but he soon removed every objection. If we suddenly fled, our horses' tramp would reveal our flight, and we should soon be overtaken, for our beasts were yet fatigued, or we might meet our enemies on our very road. Another difficulty arose; my servant's horse was hardly able to move. But the guide had thought of that—the Dervish's horse must be about, and going out, he soon discovered it concealed among the ruins. It was saddled; and we soon packed up all our travelling furniture upon it and the other two horses, and led them all three silently among the ruins. Narses charged us to remain perfectly still, and not to move till he came back, but to fear nothing.

"He left us, and ascended a small hillock in front of the ruins, and laying himself flat down, raised a low but clear whistle from the Dervish's pipe. All was still for some minutes, and they were most anxious minutes I assure you; presently the sound of approaching horsemen was heard, as if slowly and cautiously advancing *along the way road by which we had to fly*. From our hiding-place, through a hole in the wall, and by the light of the moon, I could see them draw nigh—five Bedouins nobly mounted, and armed to the teeth. They stopped at a little green spot just below where the Armenian was, the former garden of the monastery, and dismounted. My heart throbbed, as I saw them walk stealthily towards the door, close to where my faithful guide lay. Should they discover him, I saw no hope of escape. But how I thanked Heaven, when they passed him unnoticed. And yet my anxiety was not relieved, as, instead of seeing him return, I beheld him crouching on the ground and creeping towards the Arab steeds, which were browsing quiet as lambs, where their owners had dismounted. I was almost tempted in my impatience, to call out to him; but I repressed my feelings, and soon saw the superiority of his coolness and experience. He held in his hand a sharp and crooked knife, and in the twinkling of an eye cut through the girth and bridle of each

horse on the off side, and in another moment was at my side—"Now mount and away," he said, and we were instantly on our saddles, and our horses were dashing along the path. Scarcely had we cleared the ruins, when we heard an outcry of surprise and rage. The Arabs finding all dark and silent, had had to strike a light, and having now no doubt discovered the body of their wretched companion, were rushing tumultuously out, exclaiming and shouting curses upon us. I looked round for a moment, as they reached their horses, and saw the noble beasts turning round and round unmanageable, and their masters, some rolling on the ground, some mending their harness, all bewildered and enraged. My guide at this, in spite of our anxious situation, could not restrain a hearty laugh, in which I joined. On however we went, and rested not till we reached the first village on our road."

"You were fortunate indeed," some one remarked, "in finding such a servant."

"I was in truth: but from him I learnt a lesson of experience, which has never since failed me. No complaint is more common among travellers than that of their being taken in by servants, who appear most steady and even religious. I have never yet heard of one that was deceived in one that was charitable. I have myself been duped by persons who said long prayers, and under pretence of them neglected their work, or who fasted much or pretended to do so, or who put on an expression of great piety. But never yet have I been so, by one who gave to the poor of the little that he had himself. I have never yet known a hypocrite who affected sanctity by lavish alms, or tried to gain a false character for sanctity, by making himself poor through charity. On the other hand, I have known servants and others in humble situations, who freely gave alms to those poorer than themselves, nay, who parted with almost all their little gains in their favour; and never have I known one such to turn out dishonest or irreligious. Depend upon it one of the best outward tests of sound principles of virtue, is kindness to the destitute, and the love of relieving them, and liberality in alms-giving." M.

THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR.

By S. FERGUSON.

"COME, see the Dolphin's Anchor forg'd; 'tis at a white heat now: The bellows ceased, the flames decreased; though on the forge's brow,

The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound; And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round, A clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare; Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there. The windlass strains the tackle chains, the black mound heaves below;

And red and deep a hundred veins burst out at every throe: It rises, roars, rends all outright—O Vulcan, what a glow!

'Tis blinding white, 'tis blasting bright; the high sun shines not so
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery fearful show;
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy lurid row
Of smiths, that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe;
As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster, slow
Sinks on the anvil—all about the faces fiery grow—
'Hurrah!' they shout, 'leap out—leap out;' bang, bang, the sledges go:

Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low;
A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow;
The leathern mail rebounds the hail; the rattling cinders strow
The ground around; at every bound the sweltering fountains flow;
And thick and loud the swinking crowd at every stroke pant 'ho!' Leap out, leap out, my masters; leap out and lay on load!

Let's forge a goodly anchor; a Bower, thick and broad:
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode;
And I see the good ship riding all in a perilous road
The low reef roaring on her lee; the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea; the mainmast by the board;

The bulwarks down; the rudder gone; the boats stove at the chains:
But courage still, brave mariners—the Bower yet remains,
And not an inch to flinch he deigns save when ye pitch sky high,
Then moves his head, as though he said, 'Fear nothing—here am I!'
Swing in your strokes in order; let foot and hand keep time,
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime;

But while you swing your sledges, sing; and let the burthen be,
The anchor is the anvil king, and royal craftsmen we!
Strike in, strike in—the sparks begin to dull their rustling red;
Our hammers ring with sharper din, our work will soon be sped:
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich array,
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch of clay;

Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry craftsmen here,
For the yea-heave o', and the heave-away, and the sighing seaman's cheer;

When, weighing slow, at eve they go, far, far from love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the ocean foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom he darkens down at last;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from cat was cast.—

O trusted and trustworthy guard, if thou hadst life like me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward beneath the deep green sea!
O deep sea diver, who might then behold such sights as thou?
The hoary monster's palaces! methinks what joy 'twere now
To go plumb plunging down amid the assembly of the whales,
And feel the churn'd sea round me boil beneath their scourging tails!

Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellying back, for all his ivory horn;

To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark to laugh his jaws to scorn;

To leap down on the kraken's bark, where 'mid Norwegian isles
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed miles;

Till snorting, like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far-astonished shoals

Of his back-browsing ocean calves; or, haply in a cove,
Shell-strown, and consecrate of old to some Undine's love,

To find the long-hair'd mermaids; or, hard by icy lands,
To wrestle with the sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-armed fisher of the deep, whose sports can equal thine?
The Dolphin weighs a thousand tons that tugs thy cable line;

And night by night 'tis thy delight, thy glory day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white, the giant game to play;

But shamer of our little sports! forgive the name I gave,
A fisher's joy is to destroy—thine office is to save.

O lodger in the sea-king's halls, couldst thou but understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side, or who that dripping band,

Slow swaying in the heaving waves that round about the bend,
With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their ancient friend:

Oh, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger steps round thee,

Thine iron side would swell with pride; thou'dst leap within the sea!

Give honour to their memories who left the pleasant strand,
To shed their blood so freely for the love of father-land,

Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy churchyard grave,
So freely, for a restless bed amid the tossing wave:

Oh, though our anchor may not be all I have fondly sung,
Honour him for their memory, whose bones he goes among!"

THE ROBIN.

PRETTY cock-robin, the delight of our childhood, and an object of protection in our riper years. Wherever there is plenty of shelter for him, his song may be heard throughout the entire year, even in the midst of frost and snow. In the whole catalogue of British birds, cock-robin is the only one which in his wild state can be really considered familiar with man. Others are rendered tame by famine and cold weather, and will cautiously approach the spot where food is thrown for them, but the robin will actually alight upon your table, and pick up crumbs on your own plate. When I have been digging in the pleasure-ground, he has come and sat upon my spade; and by every gesture proved his confidence. You cannot halt for any moderate time in the wood, but cock-robin is sure to approach, and cheer you with an inward note or two; and on such occasions he has more than once alighted on my foot. This familiarity is inherent in him, and not acquired. I am not acquainted with any other wild bird that possesses it. In Italy this social disposition of his does not guarantee him from destruction by the hand of man. At the bird market, near the Rotunda, in Rome, I have counted more than fifty robin-redbreasts lying dead on one stall. "Is it possible," said I to the vender, "that you can kill and eat these pretty songsters?" "Yes," said he, with a grin; "and if you will take a dozen of them home for your dinner to-day, you will come back for two dozen to-morrow." It is the innocent familiarity of this sweet warbler which causes it to be such a favourite with all ranks of the people in England. Nobody ever thinks of doing it an injury. "That's poor cock-robin! don't hurt poor cock-robin," says the nursery maid, when her infant charge would wish to capture it. Mrs. Barbauld has introduced cock-robin into her plaintive story of *Pity*; and when we study the habits of this bird, and see that his intimacy with us far surpasses that of any other known wild one, we no longer wonder that the author of that pathetic ballad, the *Children in the Wood*, should have singled out the redbreast amongst all the feathered tribe, to do them the last sad act of kindness. They had been barbarously left to perish, and had died of cold and want. Cock-robin found them, and he is described as bringing leaves in his mouth, and covering their dead bodies with them.

"Their pretty lips with blackberries
Were all besmear'd and dyed:
And when they saw the darksome night,
They laid them down and cried.

"No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives,
Till robin-redbreasts, painfully,
Did cover them with leaves."

This ballad has something in it peculiarly calculated to touch the finest feelings of the human heart. Perhaps there is not a village or hamlet in England that has not heard what befel the babes in the wood; and how poor cock-robin did all in his power for them when death had closed their eyes. I wish it were in my power to do only half as much favour for some other birds as this well-known ballad of the *Children in the Wood* has done for poor cock-robin.—*Waterton's Essays on Natural History*.

NATURALIZATION OF THE ALPACA IN SCOTLAND.

THE following interesting account of the progress of this experiment is communicated by Mr. Stirling to the Highland Society, and published in their Transactions. The experiment of acclimatising this animal may be deemed settled. How far it will prove profitable remains to be seen. Its soft silky wool is very valuable, and its fleece is heavy. It is available as a beast of burden. Whether it can be used for the dairy, and how far its flesh may suit English palates, are questions we believe yet to be answered. If the general result be satisfactory, the Alpaca will be an acquisition indeed for the more mountainous parts of our island, where none but the poorest and smallest of sheep now find a scanty and precarious subsistence.—"The Alpacas arrived in the latter end of August. When the weather became cold, and the nights were getting long, a wooden shed was erected for them in the park. At first they hardly ever went into it; but when winter commenced, I made the keeper (whom they followed like a dog) put up a small rack in their shed, in which was placed some rye-grass hay. The weather was fine, and they ate very little of it; but by and bye, as winter advanced, they relished it better. I then ordered them to get a few yellow turnips, which at first they seemed to like, but, tiring of them, I desired a little corn to be given, which they partook of pretty freely; but one day the keeper told me they would not eat their corn, especially when the hay was good. Having some excellent beans, I ordered the man to try them with a few. No sooner did the Alpacas hear the beans rattling in the dish than they showed an eager desire to have them, and during several months, preferred them to every other sort of grain; indeed, so much so, that upon some oats being intermixed with the beans, the latter were picked out and the former neglected. What is extremely satisfactory, is the hardness of these animals compared with our sheep, and their indefatigable perseverance in searching for food, when sheep would to a certainty starve. I may state that this winter, 1843-4, has proved a most severe one. The park in which the Alpacas and sheep were confined, was covered for nearly three weeks with snow; and during that time there was not a vestige of herbage to be seen, with the exception of some little green tufts under the trees. The sheep required to be regularly fed with turnips and hay. Not so the Alpacas; they were seen in the most stormy days under the trees for hours, constantly eating the grass, and never minding either the cold or snow. They have never had a day's illness, have never attempted to leap a fence, and are far easier to keep within an inclosure than the common sheep.

It is judgment to see the end one aims at; to reach it, is accuracy; to stop at it, is a mark of strength; to go beyond it, is, perhaps, or may be thought, weakness.

One ascribes sometimes to virtue actions in which it has little share. A service tendered through vanity, or done through weakness, does little honour to virtue.

Every head of a sect prides himself on having discovered the truth. They contend about it one with another, and their very disputes sufficiently show that not one of them has found it.

LETTERS FROM BELGIUM.

LETTER VII.

Belgium, August 29th, 1843.

[Continued from page 221.]

IT is long since I last wrote, partly from being engaged with very important and serious business, and partly from the difficulty and delicacy of the subject upon which I intended to write. Doubting if, indeed, I ought to lay it before you at all, lest by my defective treating so sacred a truth, I might expose it to the contempt of one to whom it is as yet a stranger.

While hesitating whether to address you on this point or not, the glad news has reached me of the conversion of your friend, accompanied by the avowal, that you are "almost a Roman Catholic." May God Almighty bless you, and guide you on to a full persuasion, so that you may, ere long, bear not "almost but altogether" that life-giving title.

I need, therefore, not any longer fear and tremble to lay open to you our most glorious believing, as I have hitherto done, but open up to you the treasure-house of our secret riches, and try to bring you to understand something of our consolation, our refuge, and our trust, in the possession of the presence of Christ, dwelling among us, the Divine Solitary of our altar.

This point of belief has been so entirely laid aside by your church, that you have no vestige left by which to catch a glimpse of this great truth; in addition to which, so much has been placed constantly before the minds of the children of the Anglican church, about idolatry and worshipping a wafer, that they dread even to inquire what it is we do believe, and shun, as something too horrid to dwell upon, any explanation we have to offer. This point of faith, therefore, has become to them quite hidden, and if any one will even dare to inquire concerning it, the protestant mind does not reach it, often does not comprehend it, and it quickly fades away again. Even those who embrace our faith, are often long before they arrive at a perception of its reality. The Man-God has so entirely given himself to us in this adorable presence in the blessed sacrament of the altar, that the mind of man cannot grasp the vastness of his invention of Love, even when daily educated in the doctrine of the Divine Presence, how should those seize it who hear of it for the first time? Its being so incomprehensible is, however, one proof of its being God's own invention, for how could man have ever dared to devise such condescending abasement for the Almighty?

Those who study natural philosophy, have many opportunities of admiring the analogy of nature, and of thence tracing her works to be of the same divine Hand throughout the varied creation. You have probably read Bell On the Hand. The original model worked out into every possible variation, to suit the creature to whose use it was intended to serve, from the crawling lizard and the clinging bat, upwards through every species of animal, and on to that perfect instrument, the hand of man. All worked systemati-

cally out from the same model, showing the same Master-Hand had planned and created all. The christian, the Roman Catholic, has constant opportunity of identifying his several points of belief as the plans of God, by tracing out their analogy with the Old Testament dispensation. And thus those best acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and who have been much accustomed to meditate upon the Jewish revelation, are ever those among Roman Catholics who have the clearest perception of God's revelation to the church, of our sublime and beautiful points of faith, especially the doctrine of the Divine Presence. In reading the scriptures, we perceive in every thing a preparation for, and a reference to, this finishing work of Love.

The sensible Presence of God was variously manifested throughout his ancient government of his chosen people, and became a fixed centre for their worship, when he commanded them, as Moses has written, *Exodus* xxv. 8. "They shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them." I wish you would read carefully over the xxv. xxvi. xxvii. and xxviii. chapters of the book of *Exodus*. You will there see the preparation made for the Divine Inhabitant. The account of the making of the Tabernacle, the Altar, the candlestick, the Table of the loaves of Propitiation, and the Ark, will impress upon your mind the idea of the sensible Presence of God among his people on earth. Think awhile over these chapters, till you bring before your mind the inconceivable condescension of Jehovah, bowing down from his eternal dwelling-place, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, to abide in a little room about 30 cubits long and 10 wide, formed by curtains, and which could be taken to pieces, and borne about by men, as often as they chose to change their place of encampment. Think awhile over this lowly dwelling-place, made indeed of the best earth had to offer; but what are our earthly riches to Him, who "sitteth upon the globe of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as locusts: that stretcheth out the heavens as nothing, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." *Isaiah* xl. 22. "He who stretcheth out the heavens like a pavilion, who covereth the higher rooms thereof with water, who is clothed with light as with a garment."

This little tent or tabernacle was divided into two parts, one part 20 cubits long, the other 10 cubits, making it altogether 30 cubits in length. It was 10 in height. The little division formed a square, 10 cubits long, 10 cubits wide, 10 cubits high. These two compartments were separated from each other by a curtain. In the outer division were placed the candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table for the loaves of propitiation. In the inner division, which God condescended to render Holy of Holies by His presence, was placed the ark of the covenant. A little box incased with gold, two cubits and half long, a cubit and half broad, and a cubit and half high. This little gilt box was to contain the testimony or law of God; thence called the ark of the testimony, or will of God. Also called the ark of the covenant, from this testimony being the condition of the covenant made between God and man. "If they will keep my law, I will be their God." It was also to

contain "a golden pot that had manna, and the rod of Aaron that had budded." *Heb. ix. 4.*

At the top of this little box was the propitiatory, which is supposed by great interpreters to have been the lid or cover of the ark. Upon this propitiatory were placed two cherubims, formed as we are accustomed to see angels represented. Above this propitiatory, perhaps upon the tips of the wings of these cherubims, where the wings approached each other, was the seat of the Most High God, who had said, "thence will I give my orders, and will speak to thee over the propitiatory, and from the midst of the two cherubims." *Exodus xxv. 22.*

That little spot, a space so small, that a man might cover it with his hand, became the home of God. The home of that "exceeding great God, at whose anger the earth shook and trembled, the foundations of the mountains were troubled," who "ascended upon the cherubims, and flew upon the wings of the wind." "Heaven and earth are full of his glory."

Here Jehovah spoke to Moses with a living voice. A true oracle. "When Moses entered into the tabernacle of the covenant, to consult the oracle, he heard the voice of one speaking to him from the propitiatory, that was over the ark between the two cherubims, and from this place he spoke to him." *Num. vii. 89.*

This was the base upon which every Israelite reposed; this his centre, his guiding star, his refuge and his trust. God dwelling among his people. "What other nation had God so nigh?"

Towards this sacred spot every heart, every feeling was turned. Around this holy centre they assembled for sacrifice, for prayer, for instruction, for blessing, for reproof.

I will suppose you to have read over the chapters I proposed, and now let us try to bring before our imagination the chosen people living under the government of their Almighty King.

Their government was a theocracy—they were God-governed. God dwelling among them, gave his laws "from the propitiatory above the ark."

It was God who regulated the most minute details of the ceremonies of his worship. How spiritually might they live under such a government!

Let us try to imagine the people of God living with their great Creator thus "in the midst" of them.

From "the day the tabernacle was reared up, a cloud covered it. And from the evening there was over the tabernacle, as it were, the appearance of fire. So it was always." Within the larger division, and before the holy of holies, stood the altar of incense, sending up its grateful perfumes; on the south side burned perpetually the seven lights from the golden candlestick "looking over against the north side" towards the table bearing the loaves of propitiation, which the Priests must weekly renew. Before the entrance of the tabernacle was the altar of burnt-offerings, on which a perpetual fire burned, kept up by the Priests, whose care it was to "lay on wood every morning." Nearest around the tabernacle the Levites lay encamped "keeping watch," the guardians of Jehovah's chosen home. *Num. i. 53.* Around, beyond,

were pitched the tents of the people, encamped "by their troops, ensigns, and standards, and the houses of their kindreds." *Num. ii. 2.*

All was ordained to keep their precious possession ever before their memory: Dear indeed to the Israelite was his worship, with its ceremonies. And glad must be to him the voice of the "silver trumpets," which their Priests were taught of God to "sound," to "assemble them" before this consecrated spot—"the door of the tabernacle," *Num. x.* for worship, for sacrifice. How joyously must they approach this "door," to which they must come to receive pardon of sin and every blessing!

At the "door of the tabernacle" the sacrifices were offered morning and evening, before the assembled multitude. On their festival days and banqueting days, the trumpets were sounded, to call their attention to "remember the Lord, *Num. x. 10.* in assembling them before Him at the door of the tabernacle." How devoutly must they prostrate themselves with "God so nigh!"

When their Priests were to be consecrated, the ceremonies were performed "at the door of the tabernacle, with all the congregation gathered together."

Here the glory of the Lord appeared, and they "praised the Lord, falling on their faces."

Here they waited while the high Priest entered into the sanctuary, "to pray for himself, and his house, and for the whole congregation."

Here they came to ask by the mouth of Moses what the Lord would command concerning the heinous offender.

Here they must bring their first-fruits and the firstlings of their flocks, and whosoever refused, and offered it not at the door of the tabernacle was guilty of death.

Here the high Priest "stretched forth his hands and blessed them."

"How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! As woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, as cedars by the water-side. The Lord his God is with him, and the sound of the victory of the King is in him." *Num. xxii. xxiv.*

So felt the prophet when "lifting up his eyes, he saw Israel abiding in their tents by their tribes;" and so must the diligent student of the scriptures feel, when he brings before his mind by contemplation, the "exalted race" thus dwelling around their God.

But had Balaam, in his vision, a perception granted to him of the perfection of this beauty, brought out as it is to the Roman Catholic, in Christ's dwelling "within the church in the sacrament of the altar," that he connects the loveliness of the presence of Jehovah amidst the Israelites, with the seeing Christ in his vision? And bursts forth in the rapturous declaration: "I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel." *xxiv. 17.*

Was the loveliness which Balaam saw in the indwelling of God amongst his people, represented to him in its completion, in the abiding presence of

Christ in the Catholic churches? Like one possessing a bud of some lovely stranger flower, to whom a correct painting is shown of what that bud shall be when fully blossomed.

The Roman Catholic feels that thus it must have been with one who was permitted to be "the hearer of the words of God," and to know "the doctrine of the Highest," ver. 16.

In the same manner as the sacrifices of the Jewish altar prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, so the dwelling of God "over the propitiatory" was the prefiguring, first visit of the Heavenly Lover to his betrothed Church, whom in "the fulness of time" he was to "espouse to him for ever," *Osee* ii. 19, delivering himself for her, nourishing her, and cherishing her, *Eph.* v. 25, 29, by "being with her always." *Matt.* xxviii. 20.

I would detain your mind a little longer on this subject, though I fear you find it dry and tedious, by pointing out to you a few passages in the holy scriptures, where the abiding presence of Christ is alluded to by the inspired writers. You will not think it dry if I should succeed in bringing you to see your kind Redeemer in this his nearest abiding relation to you. You could not grow tired of learning the reality of the presence of such a friend. Have patience with me, then, while I try to bring you to the faith which will show you Jesus living beside you, really with you; in the same human nature as your own, "man of the substance of his mother." (*Athan. Creed*) Abiding with you in his human nature to sympathize with your weakness, abiding with you in his God-like nature to be your Protector, your Guardian, your Guide to eternal glory.

Bear in mind the reality of the presence of God in the Jewish tabernacle, and you will see that the passages I shall cite have reference to this, and in this to something yet to come, more perfectly manifested.

Solomon's dedication of the temple: "Building, I have built a house for thy dwelling, to be thy most firm throne for ever." *Kings*, viii. 13.

The Psalmists have a special tendency to dwell upon the thought of God in his holy temple. I will only remind you of a very few passages. To the Roman Catholic these are full of the deepest meaning, and I think if you consider them attentively, you will see in them a reference to something beyond the sense in which Protestants usually interpret them. *Psalm*, xlv. 5, 6. Roman Catholic Bible. [Protestant Bible, *Psalm* xlv.] The Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle. God is in the midst thereof.

Psalm xxiii. [Prot. Bib. xxiv.] Who shall ascend into the mountains of the Lord: or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent of hands and clean of heart, &c.

You can scarcely believe how this is understood by the faithful Roman Catholic, nor the reverence he has for the church where Jesus reposes.

Psalm xxviii. Prayer-book translation xxix. This psalm was composed by David for the finishing of the tabernacle, and is full of reference to the presence of God therein. Adore ye the Lord in his holy court: in his temple shall all speak to his glory.

You know well the cxxxi *Psalm*, [Prot. Bib. cxxxi.]

read it over now, and see how strongly it refers to Christ, of whom David was a figure. St. Hilarius explains it thus: "Jesus Christ, looking upon himself in heaven before his incarnation, as David in his palace of cedar, which was an emblem of immortality, vowed when he should descend upon earth, not to enter into his house, nor to go up unto his bed, to give to his sacred humanity the divine sleep and rest which was prepared for him in the bosom of the eternal Father, until he had built a house for the Lord, which is no other than his church," &c. This house he declares ver. 13, he has chosen for his "*dwelling*," "This is my rest for ever and ever: here will I *dwell*, for I have chosen it."

Ps. xlvii. [Prot. Bib. xlviii.] The Psalmist founds all the greatness of the Jewish nation, at which "the kings of the earth" should wonder, upon the fact of its being "the city of the great king;" founded by him, [ver. 9.] dwelt in by him, [ver. 1.] and blest from "the midst of the temple" [ver. 10.] by him. So the Roman Catholic finds all the glory of his religion in the possession of Christ within his temple.

Ps. lxxxiii. [Prot. Bib. lxxxiv.] "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." Can any one read this psalm, and not feel that the strong feeling therein expressed must have reference to something very far beyond the common reverence we have towards a building where God is simply worshipped? And that the prophet, looking into futurity, and aspiring after heaven, saw also something of the heaven which Christ should create for his Church on earth by his constant presence in her temples. Roman Catholics do in very deed envy "the sparrow" and "the turtle," who live in the house where Jesus rests. Rarely is a Catholic church found quite deserted; some solitary worshipper is there keeping watch before the tabernacle in holy communion with his waiting Saviour, and calling upon God his "Protector" [10] to behold and look upon the face of his Christ. For because Christ dwells there, God, for Christ's sake, will look down from heaven and "give a blessing," and that, therefore, to pass "one day," or one hour in a church, is above thousands.

I may not go on, texts multiply too fast upon my memory. The sacred scriptures, to a Roman Catholic, are filled with reference to this point of his faith. The many passages in the prophets I must leave quite unnoticed; but you will perceive them for yourself, if you will bear our beautiful believing in mind while reading the word of God.

It is time now to show you something of the influence our faith in Christ's presence has upon our worship. But I forget you are as yet unacquainted with the arrangements of the church for preserving the sacred Host in her temples. A place is built in every church to contain the holy deposit, and is called the Tabernacle. The manner of constructing these tabernacles differs in different churches. The most usual method in these parts, is to have a sort of little closet erected above our altars, divided into two compartments, one over the other. The underneath division is the smallest. The whole answering

to the form of the Jewish tabernacle, only that the two divisions are placed one above the other, instead of one before the other. It is also, of course, much smaller than the Jewish tabernacle, the general size being about 4 feet in height and one and a half in width or depth. The sacred Host is preserved in the lower compartment, in which it is placed by the Priest after consecration, during the Mass. This smaller chamber answers to the Holy of Holies, and the gold or silver vase in which it is laid, answers to the Propitiatory.

This sacred depositary is kept locked, the Priest alone having authority to unlock it. When the Church allows the sacred Host to be exposed for the adoration of the congregation, the Priest places it in the upper division of the Tabernacle, which is then left open. The sacred Host is placed to be so exposed, either in the vase in which it is preserved, or in another called a Remonstrance, which is so constructed that the sacred Host can be seen by the worshippers.

Every church furnishes all she has of best and most costly, to be used about the Blessed Sacrament. Every vessel used for containing or touching it must be of pure silver or gold. The finest lawn or cambric, ornamented with the richest lace, must alone be spread beneath these consecrated vessels; and the finest silks and cloths of gold or silver, line and adorn the interior of the Tabernacle.

We "yield him in costly devotion,"

(not as a substitute for the "heart's adoration," but in testimony of it.)

"Odours of Edom and offerings divine;

Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,

Myrrh from the forest and gold from the mine," *B. Heber.*

The Church being wholly absorbed with grief on Holy Thursday, the day of the institution of the blessed Sacrament by our dear Lord, there is not then opportunity for celebrating this great festival with fitting ceremony. She, therefore, takes a season of entire rest from all other solemnities to celebrate it; and the Thursday after Trinity Sunday is appointed as the first of the seven days which she dedicates to this her feast of thanksgiving. The feast is solemnised annually, with all the pomp and splendour that can be commanded in each town or village. It is our grand religious holiday of the summer—the great festival of "remembrance" of the love of Jesus, for his adorable gift to us of the Sacrament of his precious body and blood. In catholic countries which are free to celebrate their religious festivals as they please, Thursday is the principal day; but in countries such as Belgium, where the laws made by Napoleon have not been changed, they have their public procession on the Sunday, which falls within the festal week. The inhabitants of each town and village unite heart and hand to decorate the streets through which the procession is to pass. Our little village is transformed into a bright bower of fairy land. All that is gayest and best is brought out to ornament the fronts of the houses, or decorate the streets. Triumphant arches are erected, and the whole route strewed with flowers and green leaves

and rushes. Even the children can form ornaments in flowers, I. H. S. and other significant symbols, in reeds, and roses, and other flower leaves. Stars and crowns very exactly and tastefully made, carpet our rustic stones. All our gardens are laid under contribution; indeed, the cultivation of flowers is much practised expressly with a view to their being used on this glad day. I may, perhaps, give you a history of this octave during the summer.

Every Thursday in the year is honoured as the day of the week on which this great sacrament was instituted. In most of our books of devotion you will find a litany and other prayers suitable to the service of this day. Many persons leave by will some service for Thursday, in honour of the holy sacrament. We have a foundation in our parish for a service every first or second Thursday in the month. The blessed Sacrament is exposed during the service, and persons receive the holy Communion. Thursday has always something of holy and joyous to us, even in its very name. Something extra is always provided for dinner or kept in store for Thursday, as it is almost certain some intimate friend or distant Priest will drop in on this sort of half-festival day.

Every Sunday, when the afternoon service is finished, there is a short chanted service to invoke the benediction of Christ as dwelling among us in the holy Sacrament. The blessed Sacrament is exposed while the congregation kneel before it in supplication. In towns this benediction service is performed every evening, or towards evening; in villages we have it only occasionally.

Besides all these incitements to "remember" the dying legacy of Jesus, there is a society called "The society of perpetual adoration of Jesus." This society is established in most towns and villages. It is intended by it to provide that Jesus shall never be an instant of time, either day or night, without some worshippers to adore in "remembrance" of his love in giving himself to us in the most holy Sacrament. Each parish has one day in the year appointed as its day of adoration. Ours for example is the 8th of May, beginning at twelve o'clock in the night and ending with twelve o'clock the next night. Persons who choose to be members of this society, (and few are not among us) are required by its laws to adore Christ for one hour during the day or night. Those who are strong or who wish to make some effort to serve God, choose a night hour; others an hour in the day, each according to his circumstances. The Pastor regulates the hours of his parishioners, so that each shall be filled up by several worshippers; in order that in case of sickness or other hinderance the hour may be occupied by some. Those who choose night hours pray at home in their houses. Those who choose an hour after the church is opened, which it is at six, go into the church to perform this devotion.

It is a festival, many services are performed during the day. These are begun at six, by the exposition of the blessed Sacrament in the Remonstrance in the upper division of the tabernacle, and the chanting the *Veni Creator*.

The early members come in to "pray their hour" as they call it. The head farmers and trades-people begin to take their places, two at a time, on each side of the altar one. Little desks have been placed for them; a large candle is lighted by the beadle and placed beside them, which he removes as their hour expires, and places two for the next two worshippers who stand ready to take their places. This is continued throughout the day. A clock is placed in the church to note our hours to us. Masses are said during the morning, as neighbouring Priests come to assist on this day. The afternoon is filled up by Vespers, preaching, and Benediction service; and the holy Sacrament is closed towards dusk with chanting the Te Deum. The Priest and many worshippers still linger to adore, some who have still to pray their hour, and some for voluntary devotion. But I must give you my diary of this day also when it comes; it is one of my most beautiful days, and must not be left with only this dry description. You must be brought acquainted with it on its living day. As our day expires, some other parish takes up our work; and at twelve o'clock their day of adoration begins, and continues on under the same regulations; and thus from parish to parish throughout the year.

These days of solemn devotion furnish us with a constant means of spending a day with God, whenever our inclination and fitting opportunity lead us to do so. Sometimes our people spend a whole day, sometimes part of one, in some neighbouring village on its day of adoration. As I cannot give you an account of our own day with this letter, I have been inquiring to-day, 1st December, where it was "adoration day" around us, that I might go for your gratification, in giving you my diary, as I go to one and another place when convenient. I have heard of a little out-of-the-world village whose day of perpetual adoration is next Monday. Its picturesque neighbourhood and old dilapidated church, and its altogether extreme seclusion, have tempted me to propose visiting it, being sure to find in the devotion of its Pastor and people a fund of instruction and interest for you.

But I fear I must again take you out by moonlight with me, as on Christmas morning; for, to be present at the early morning services, we must leave home at six o'clock or before, it being a journey of two hours and a half. This to be accomplished on a December morning must have specially fine weather, which indeed we are promised, it being mild and sunny, and more like October than December. So if you will not think me wild for planning such a journey, and will try to recollect that we Belgians have the habit of going out early, from our daily morning service always obliging us to do so, if we would be present, I will do my best to bring you acquainted with the picturesque little village of C. by giving you my diary of the pleasant day I promise myself to spend there.

(To be continued.)

"HAIL MARY."

AVE Maria! pure vessel of Grace,
Now with thy Son in His bright dwelling-place,
Most blessed art Thou midst the daughters of earth,
And blessed is Jesus, the fruit of thy birth.

Sancta Maria! sweet Mother of God,
In sorrow Thou hast in life's pilgrimage trod;
Then pray for us sinners that pilgrimage wending,
And when the dread shadows of death are descending,
In the tumult of agony, sadness, and fear,
Oh, pray for us! pray for us! Sancta Maria.

C. H. C., Manchester.

SINGULAR EFFECT OF THE MIRAGE.

WHILST I was sitting, I had an opportunity of observing a singular effect of mirage upon the summit of a long low ridge, that formed one of the sides of the valley of Hasanderah. It evidently depended upon the refraction of the rays of light passing through a stratum of air, in which was suspended or contained a considerable quantity of the vapour of water, and which, of less specific gravity than the air itself, was rising from the damp earth in this neighbourhood. On the top of the ridge, standing in high relief from the grey sky behind him, was a Bedouin, who, of gigantic proportions, seemed to be quite as tall as a very high tree, which was growing near to where he stood. I looked at him with astonishment, and thought of the enemy described by Ossian's frightened scout—"I saw their chief, tall as a rock of ice; his shield the rising moon, his spear a blasted pine;" of so enormous a size was the figure and arms of this supernatural-looking being. Feeling assured that it must be some unusual phenomenon, rather than any thing real, I left my seat to examine more closely the unmoving bronze colossus upon the height. A short walk soon proved to me that I was not wrong in my idea of the real character of this appearance, for I found that the tall tree, on my approach, sunk into a low mimosa bush scarcely five feet high, and the tall giant reduced himself to the form of my Hy Soumalee friend, Carmel Ibrahim, who was waiting very leisurely a little apart, like myself, the departure of the Kafilah.—*Johnston's Travels in Abyssinia.*

FEROCITY OF AN ELEPHANT.

IT is impossible to imagine the ferocity of the elephant when he is excited to revenge. The melancholy end of Major Haddock, of the 97th Regiment, was horribly illustrative of this: he had fired his last barrel when an elephant gave chase, and Haddock made the best of his way to a small patch of jungle close by, hoping to dodge the elephant round it until it got tired of the fun, and sheered off; but before five minutes had elapsed, he unfortunately ran round the very corner behind which the animal kept itself concealed, and in a moment he was laid hold of. He had no one with him but natives, who, at a pinch, are about the greatest fools ever born; the consequence was, that the elephant having crushed poor Haddock to death by kneeling on him, began to dissect him; and so cleanly was it done, that scarcely two joints were left together in the body of the victim. How the animal could have thus accomplished such a task by means of that unwieldy-looking instrument it possessed in the shape of a trunk, is utterly inexplicable.—*New Sporting Magazine.*

